(c) if not, whether Government are holding or propose to hold any talks in this regard with the present Afghan Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) There is no evidence available with the Ministry of External Affairs which could establish that the mortal remains of King Prithviraj Chauhan are buried in Afghanistan.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) Question does not arise.

Problems faced by Indian workers in Riyadh

1002. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the adverse circumstances in which scores of Indian workers of an engineering firm in Riyadh have been living due to non-receipt of their salaries, their visas having been expired and their passports in possession of their employers, as reported in the Hindu dated the 17th January, 2003;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken through Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia to get enforced the local Labour Court judgement delivered in favour of workers; and

(c) what are the standing guidelines for the Embassies abroad in such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Indian Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, was informed in July, 2002 by Indian nationals working in M/s Omar A Bin Bisher & Partners Co. Ltd., Riyadh, that they had filed a case in the Labour Court to recover arrears of their salaries and other service benefits. The Embassy provided all assistance in this connection. The Court ruled in favour of the workers in October, 2002. As the company has not yet implemented the verdict, the Embassy has taken up the matter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia.

(c) The standing guidelines for Embassies abroad in such cases require prompt action in taking up the complaints of Indian workers with the local authorities concerned and providing all necessary support to them.

Release of fishermen and civilian prisoners by Pakistan

1003. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:
SHRI ABANI ROY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the recent past Pakistan has indicated its intention six times to release 400 Indian fishermen and civilian prisoners, including the cases of 22 Sikh youths, in their custody but nothing has materialized so far;

(b) if so, whether this is attributable to our ineffective diplomatic efforts or there are other hidden rationale behind this state of affairs;

(c) since when such fishermen are in custody of Pakistan; and

(d) the details of the efforts made at diplomatic level to get them released so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) As per available information, Pakistan had 416 Indian fishermen in its custody apprehended by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency since January, 2002 onwards. Pakistan, in the past, on several occasions indicated its intention to release over 200 fishermen. No follow up action was, however, taken by Government of Pakistan for release and repatriation of these fishermen. Government have consistently taken up the issue of their release and repatriation with the Government of Pakistan. As a result of Government's efforts, Government of Pakistan agreed to release 280 fishermen on 24th February, 2003. Pakistan has yet to confirm the release of Sikh youths and other civilian prisoners.

Indo-China relations

1004. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state: